

Appendix D – Historical Evaluations

**Historical Evaluation of the
Buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue
Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California**

Vicki R. Beard, M.A.

May 31, 2011



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Prepared by:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "V. R. Beard", written in dark ink on a white background.

Vicki R. Beard, M.A.

Tom Origer & Associates
Post Office Box 1531
Rohnert Park, California 94927
(707) 584-8200
(707) 584-8300 (fax)

Prepared for:
Lori MacNab
City of Santa Rosa
Public Works Department
69 Stony Circle
Santa Rosa, California 95401

May 31, 2011

ABSTRACT

Tom Origer & Associates completed an architectural and historical evaluation of the buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The study was requested by the Lori MacNab of the City of Santa Rosa's Public Works Department. The study was designed to determine if the buildings were eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources based on the criteria set forth in Title 14 CCR, §4852, and follows guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act.

Historical research was conducted at the Sonoma County Recorder's Office, the office of the County Assessor, the City of Santa Rosa Community Development Department, the Sonoma County Library History Annex, and various on-line databases. The building was examined and photographs were taken of the exterior. In addition to this report, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms were completed (Appendix 1).

The study found that the building does not meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources as an individual property and does not contribute to an historic district. Documentation pertaining to the study is on file at Tom Origer & Associates (File No. 11-20BE).

Synopsis

Project: Evaluation of buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue
Location: 1400 Burbank Avenue, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California
APN: 125-331-001
Quadrangle: Santa Rosa, California 7.5' series
Study Type: Historical/architectural evaluation
Scope: Property specific
Finds: Does not appear eligible for the California Register as an individual property and is not a contributor to an historic district

Project Personnel

This report was prepared by Vicki R. Beard, who has been with Tom Origer & Associates since 1990. Ms. Beard holds a Master of Arts in cultural resources management with an emphasis in historic-period resources, and meets the Secretary of the Interior's standards for archaeology, history, and architectural history. Graduate coursework and applied studies included building and structure evaluation, and historical research. Post-graduate work has been completed in historical architecture through the Architecture Department at the University of California Berkeley; heritage resource management at the University of Nevada, Reno; and architectural history and historic landscapes through the National Preservation Institute, Alexandria, Virginia. Professional affiliations include the Society of Architectural Historians, Northern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians, and Vernacular Architecture Forum. She is also listed on the Register of Professional Archaeologists.

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INTRODUCTION

Tom Origer & Associates completed an architectural and historical evaluation of the buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California (Figure 1). The study was requested by the Lori MacNab of the City of Santa Rosa's Public Works Department. This study focuses on the property's eligibility for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) as an individual resource, and addresses its potential to contribute to an historic district.

During this evaluation, the building was examined and photographed, and primary research was completed to determine if the property met criteria for inclusion on the California Register based on the eligibility criteria set forth in Title 14 CCR, §4852. The results of the study are presented in this report and on the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms provided in Appendix A. Documentation pertaining to the study is on file at Tom Origer & Associates (File No. 10-83BE).

REGULATORY CONTEXT

This study adhered to requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which mandates that cultural resources be considered as part of the environmental review process. This is accomplished by an inventory of resources within a study area and assessing the potential that important cultural resources could be affected by a project.

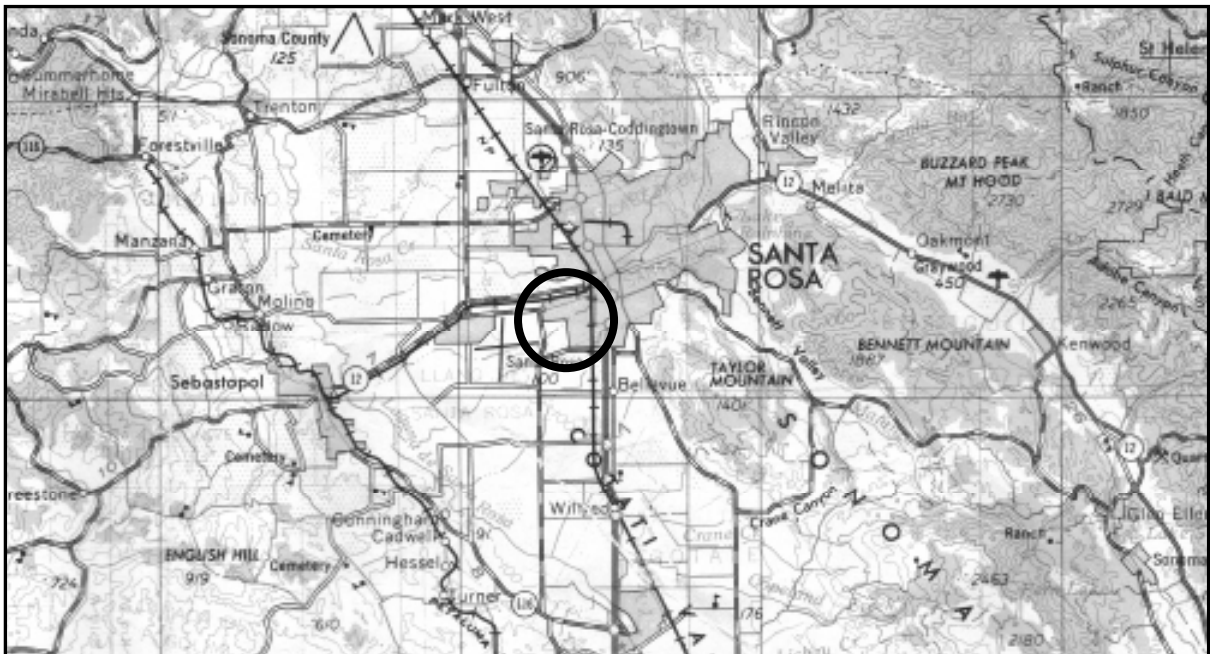


Figure 1. Project vicinity (adapted from the USGS 1970 Santa Rosa 1:100,000-scale map).

Under CEQA, when a project might affect a cultural resource (i.e., site, building, structure, object, or district) the project proponent is required to conduct an assessment to determine whether the effect may be one that is significant. Consequently, it is necessary to determine the importance of resources that could be affected. The importance of a resource is measured in terms of criteria for inclusion on the California Register (Title 14 CCR, §4852) listed below. A resource may be important if it meets any one of the criteria below, or if it is already listed on the California Register or a local register of historical resources.

An important historical resource is one which:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Previous Studies

In 1990, an architectural survey of southwest Santa Rosa was conducted by Dennis Harris and Susan Clark. Harris and Clark identified nine potential historic districts, which were reported by LSA in the *Southwest Santa Rosa Master Environmental Assessment* (LSA 1991:95-115, Appendix B). Included was the Burbank Avenue District, formed by 20 properties “[s]tretching for ten blocks along both sides of Burbank Avenue” (LSA 1991:108). The property at 1400 Burbank Avenue was included in the list Burbank Avenue properties. It was noted in the 1991 report that the Burbank Avenue District might lack architectural cohesiveness, and since that time no action has been taken to establish an official district.

Another study pertinent to the current project was conducted for the Stony Point Road reconstruction project in 1989. Although the Stony Point Road survey did not include the property on Burbank Avenue, it identified historic contexts applicable to the general area, including the significance of chicken farming and rural subdivisions (Praetzellis *et al.* 1989).

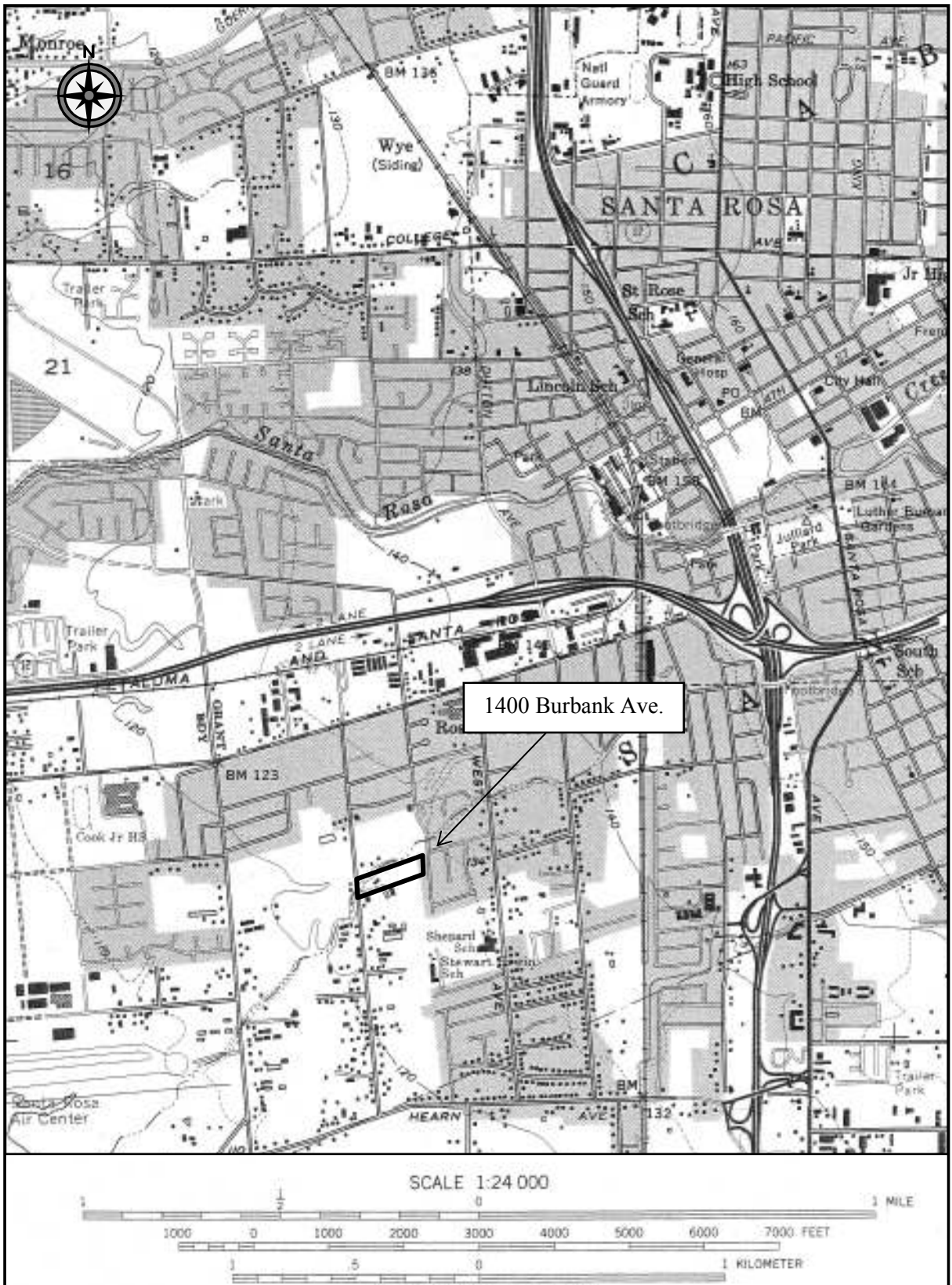


Figure 2. Study location (adapted from the USGS 1980 Santa Rosa 7.5' map).

STUDY PROCEDURES

Archival Research

This study included archival research to understand land ownership and property residents, land use, and to determine historical ties relevant to this parcel. Archival research was completed at the Sonoma County Recorder's Office, the office of the County Assessor, the Sonoma County Library History Annex, the offices of Tom Origer & Associates, and various online archives (such as Ancestry.Com and Family Search). Research results are presented in the Historical Overview and Historic Context sections of the report.

Field Survey

A field examination was conducted on May 24, 2011. All buildings were photographed, and notes were made regarding style, construction techniques, and modifications. Descriptions are provided in the Property Description section of the report.

HISTORICAL SETTING

The study parcel lies in southwest Santa Rosa (Figure 3), within the bounds of the Rancho Cabeza de Santa Rosa, an 8,885-acre grant made to María Ignacia López de Carrillo, the mother-in-law of General Mariano Vallejo. Traveling from San Diego in 1837, she brought seven of her children to settle on the rancho and built the first European dwelling in the Santa Rosa area (Hoover *et al.* 1990:479-480). After Señora Carrillo's death in 1849, most of the rancho was divided among her children. James Eldridge filed a claim with the U.S. Lands Commission in 1853 for a 1,668-acre portion in the southwestern quadrant of the Cabeza de Santa Rosa. The claim was confirmed by the district court in 1857, and he received patent to the claim in 1880 (GLO 1880).

Eldridge sold some 320 acres in the southwest corner of the grant to Joseph McMinn, as shown in Figure 4. McMinn was an early settler in the Santa Rosa area having brought his family overland from Missouri in 1852.

As an adolescent, John McMinn traveled from Missouri to California with his family, arriving in Sonoma County in 1852, where he worked on his father's farm southwest of Santa Rosa. He married Elizabeth Blair, also from Missouri, in 1861 (Munro-Fraser 1880:650), and together they had eleven children (United States Bureau of Census [USBS] 1910). The McMinn family lived on the farm outside of Santa Rosa for many years, moving into town in 1888 when John retired from farming (Toumey 1926:656-657). They sold much of the old farm to Henry Davis near the turn of the 20th century (Figure 4), and their sons, John and James Ross, were deeded 40 acres in 1904 (Deeds 209:144).

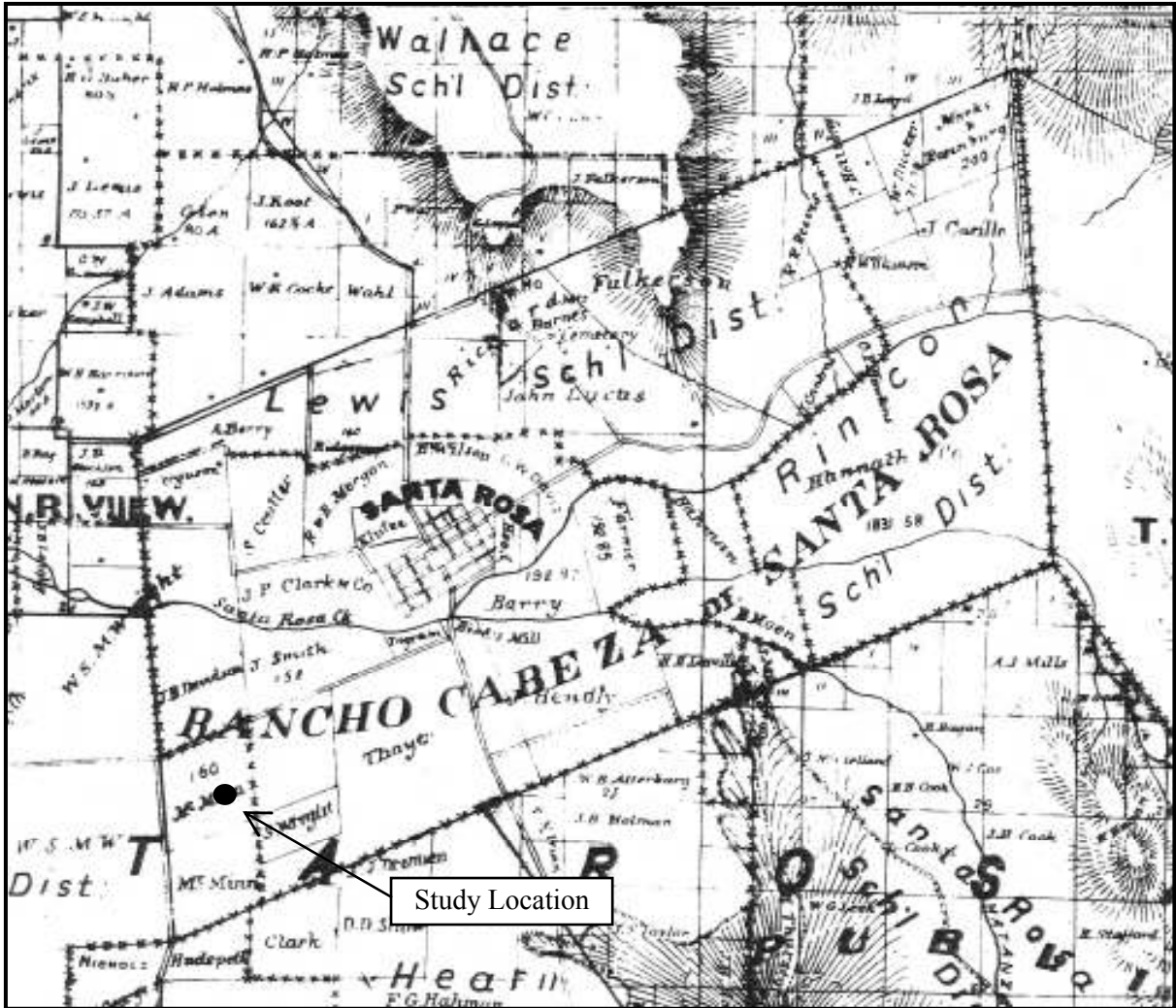


Figure 3. Divisions of the Cabeza de Santa Rosa circa 1867 (adapted from Bowers 1867).

John and James Ross sold 11 of their 40 acres to George Dutton in 1908 (Deeds 251:347), leaving them with 29 acres of the original 320-acre farm. Despite living in town, James Ross continued to farm the property, commuting from the family's 5th Street home. His brother John left the area and was in San Francisco working as a bookkeeper by 1910 (USBC 1910). During the first decade of the 20th century, the area southwest of Santa Rosa was divided again and again, and the once sprawling farmland became a Santa Rosa suburb. Neighbor Henry Davis filed a plat for the West Roseland subdivision in 1912, dividing his parcels into small farm lots, creating Burbank Avenue as part of the subdivision (Maps 28:11).

James Ross McMinn began selling portions of his farm during the 1940s and 50s. A 3.5-acre parcel to the south of the current study area was sold to members of the Malde family in 1950. In 1960, he sold the current study parcel to Alf and Borghild Gunderson. Both of these families were Norwegian, and Alf's sister Borgny was married to Paul Malde, who lived next door. The Gunderson family immigrated in 1928, and was in San Francisco in 1930 (USBC 1930).

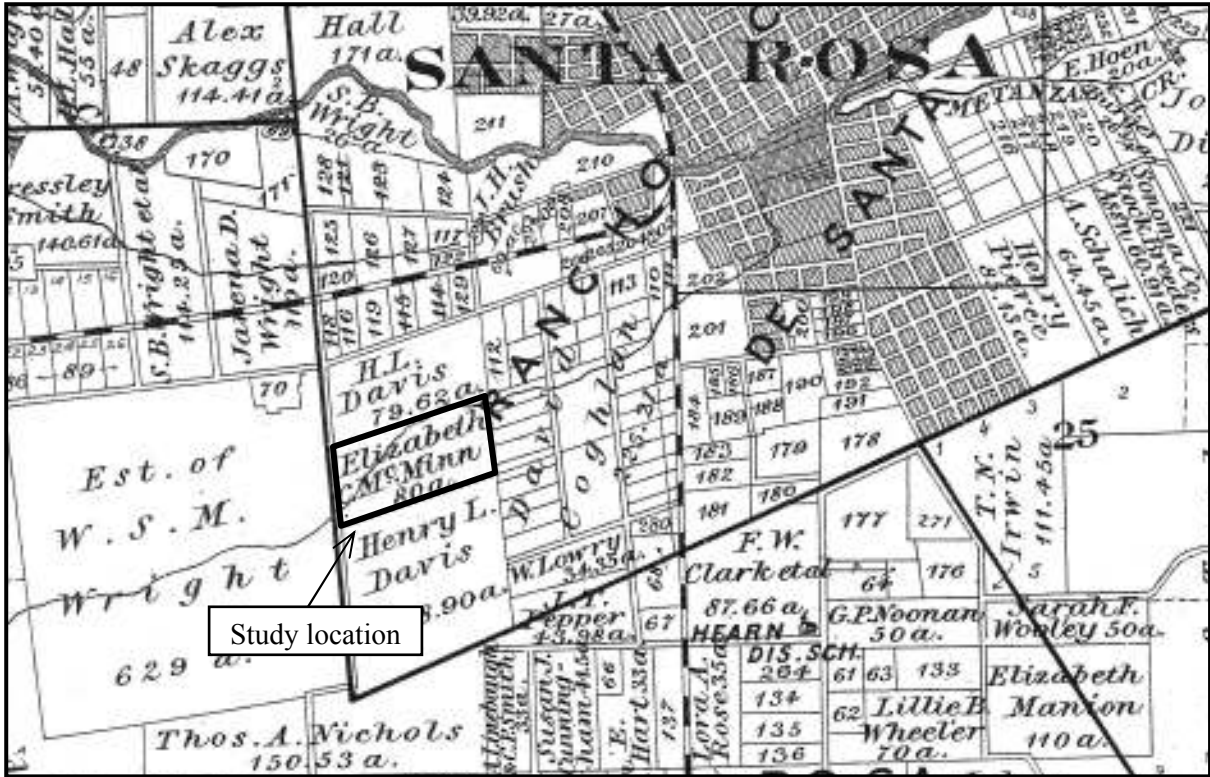


Figure 4. McMinn parcel (adapted from Reynolds and Proctor 1897).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

To evaluate the significance of a resource, it is necessary to understand historic patterns and themes that are important on national, state, and local levels. National Register Bulletin 15 provides insight into the use of historic contexts.

The significance of a historic property can be judged and explained only when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.

Preliminary research found that the building could best be understood within the context of *Rural Subdivisions, 1870 to 1950*. That context is presented below.

Rural Subdivisions, 1870 to 1950

Historical maps show how lands in the general area were being divided into increasingly smaller parcels during the last decades of the 1800s and the early 1900s. Previous architectural surveys in rural parts of Sonoma County have identified the theme of Rural

Subdivisions as important in the county's development (Johnson 1994; Praetzellis *et al.* 1989). The term "Rural Subdivision" refers to the historical phenomenon of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when large parcels were divided into progressively smaller holdings (Praetzellis *et al.* 1989). During the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a notable trend toward division of large holdings, especially at the outskirts of southwest Santa Rosa and Cotati. The earliest of these subdivisions broke large tracts of land into smaller farm parcels "large enough to accommodate a successful farming venture" (Praetzellis *et al.* 1989:18).

As the twentieth century progressed, lots created through these subdivisions were generally too small to provide a family's primary source of income. Work outside the home became increasingly necessary to sustain a family's economic viability, and there was greater reliance on goods sold at retail outlets. Where, in the past, large farms and ranches were relatively self sufficient, families living on these small farms could not meet all their own needs.

In 1937, the local newspaper made note of this trend and changing land-use in Sonoma County, citing statistics compiled by the Department of Agriculture (*Press Democrat* 1937). The *Press Democrat* revealed that between 1900 and 1935, the average size of a farm in Sonoma County fell from 214 acres to 110 acres, and that "the largest single group of farmholders in the county were those maintaining farms of 3 to 10 acres" (*Press Democrat* 1937).

The 1940s, and especially the end of World War II, brought about another phase of land subdivision reflecting peace-time prosperity after more than a decade of depression and war, and a severe housing shortage (Clark 1987). This wave of development continued the division of moderate-sized "farm" parcels into smaller, residential lots.

Resource Types - Rural Subdivisions. Rural subdivisions feature farmhouses, barns, and other agricultural outbuildings such as chicken coops, granaries, and sheds of varying sizes and shapes; structures pertaining to the capture, retention, and conveyance of water; fencing; and pens.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The house at 1400 Burbank Avenue is on a long, narrow lot and sits 225 feet east of Burbank Avenue. It is a one-story, frame structure with a compound form (Figures 5 and 6). The front of the house is very simple and appears to have been used rarely, the rear entry serving as the main access point. The door and stoop are centered on the front façade, and are flanked by narrow, double-hung windows. Outward of these windows are larger, fixed windows.

Projecting to the rear are gabled wings that create a small, U-shaped courtyard at the rear of the building. Three doorways open on to the courtyard accessing different parts of the house. Two doorways are standard sized, and one consists of a pair of French doors. A third gabled wing extends north from the northern wing. It has its own entrance on the east elevation.

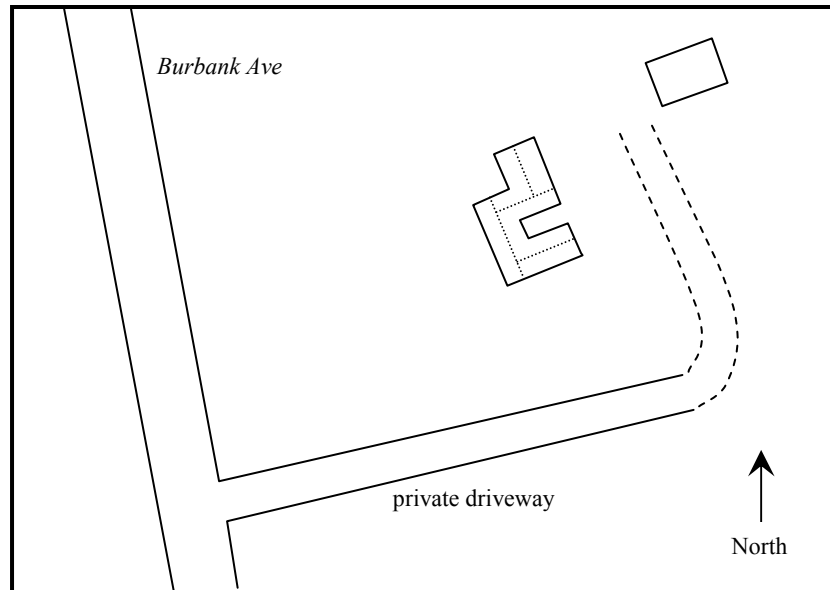


Figure 5. Sketch of the building layout.

The house is clad with narrow, lapped siding except near the bottom of each wall where vinyl siding has been installed. Decorative brackets are found at the gable ends. Windows throughout the house have vinyl sashes. At the rear of the house is a small, gable-roofed barn (Figure 7). Original siding appears to be vertical boards and battens. The roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets, and the windows are a mix of multi-paned and fixed vinyl sashes.



Figure 6. View of the south and east (rear) house elevations.



Figure 7. View of the barn, facing southwest.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine if the buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue are historically significant based on the California Register criteria provided in an earlier section of this report. Restated briefly, a building (or any other cultural resource) acquires significance from its association with an important event or pattern in history; through its association with an important person; because it represents a particular type, period, region or method of construction, the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values; or because it contains information that can be studied to enhance our understanding of history.

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, eligibility for the California Register requires that a resource retain sufficient integrity to convey a sense of its significance or importance. As defined by the State, “Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance” (Title 14, Chapter 11.5 CCR, §4852(c)). Seven elements are considered key in considering a property’s integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Within the context of Rural Subdivisions, it was necessary to determine if this property illustrates and conveys the importance of that context. The following conclusions were reached with regard to each of the California Register criteria:

Criterion 1. In order to be considered important under Criterion 1, the property needs to be able to convey the importance of the historic context. For example, a property that demonstrates the role that rural subdivisions played in creating our landscape patterns would be of a size that would allow for a small family farm but not so large that it would require the full

effort of the family to maintain. This property lacks the agricultural element of a rural subdivision lot (i.e., most outbuildings, garden, or orchards), and does not meet Criterion 1.

Criterion 2. Under Criterion 2, a property can be significant because of its association with an important person but the association must be one that reflects the reason for the person's importance. The McMinn family has a long history in Sonoma County beginning in the 1850s when they were pioneers of the Santa Rosa area. At that time, the family owned 320 acres southwest of Santa Rosa where cattle and grain production was their focus. Despite their long residence and having loaned their name to McMinn Avenue, no especially important tie was found between the McMinn family nor any of its members with the historic context of Rural Subdivisions. Criterion 2 is not met.

Criterion 3. Criterion 3 speaks to the architectural significance of a property. This property does not meet Criterion 3. No particular style, method, or type of construction is demonstrated.

Criterion 4. Criterion 4 generally applies to archaeological resources or resources that, through study of construction details, can provide information that cannot be obtained in other ways. This building possesses no intrinsic qualities that could answer questions or provide important information about our history, and Criterion 4 is not met.

SUMMARY

Tom Origer & Associates completed an architectural/historical evaluation of the buildings at 1400 Burbank Avenue in southwest Santa Rosa. The study was requested by Lori MacNab of the City of Santa Rosa. This study found that the building does not appear eligible for inclusion on the California Register as an individual property and is not a contributor to an historic district. As the property does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the California Register, no further consideration is warranted.

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Appendix A

Resource Documentation